

Without a doubt Hedican provides a necessary reevaluation of the events at Ipperwash in 1995 and the subsequent inquiry, however the book remains painfully muted up by its liberal sentiments. By reading through his objectivist positioning it become clear that this is a book aimed primarily at quelling settler fears of Indigenous resurgence by maintaining that a change in legislation is the solution to settler colonialism. While Hedican makes some mention of critical Indigenous scholarship his focus on the Canadian state denies a deeper anticolonial reading that would necessarily engage with Indigenous critique in a robust way. While *Ipperwash* remains one of the only books to analyze the topic at length its mode of analysis denies a critique of settler futurity ultimately limiting its usefulness for critical scholars of Canadian settler colonialism.

Devin Clancy  
York University

**Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). 316 pp. \$34.95 Softcover.**

In her book *Unsettling the Settler Within*, Paulette Regan begins with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's historic apology to the survivors of the Indian residential school system in 2008, calling it "a watershed moment of national truth-telling about Canada's past."<sup>2</sup> As an educator, activist, and the Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Regan is uniquely situated to speak powerfully about the unsettling potential of truth telling in the Canadian reconciliation process. Her focus in this book is primarily on healing, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada following the closing of the last Indian residential school (IRS) in 1996. However, *Unsettling the Settler Within* also constitutes a broader attempt to foreground the power of critical pedagogy and transformative learning as a framework to begin to heal the historic Indigenous-settler divide. As such, Regan argues not only that "*how* people learn about historical injustices is as important as learning truths about *what* happened" (11) but further to that, following Friere (1995), education is a transformative experience that must be linked to critical reflection and a newfound obligation to action. Herself a settler, Regan expressly claims to speak from a settler perspective, to primarily a settler audience. In doing so, Regan avoids falling into the trap of focusing on the 'Indian problem' and instead tackles how to "solve the settler problem."<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, Regan's central question asks: "How can we, as non-indigenous people, unsettle ourselves to name and then transform the

settler – the colonizer that lurks within – not just in words but by our actions, as we confront the history of colonization, violence, racism, and injustice that remains part of the IRS legacy today?”(11)

The book is organized around two themes – truth telling and reconciliation – where the former is necessarily antecedent to working toward the latter. Truth telling is both internal and relational. It requires that the settler deconstruct the flurry of colonial myths that are woven into his or her own subjectivity and engage in a collective process of both “un-learning” received truths (68) and “restorying” colonial histories.(78) This means deconstructing Canada’s peacemaker myth which, despite being a cherished bedrock of Canadian identity, “precludes us from examining our own legacy as colonizers” and (re)creates a heroic history of peaceful settlement that declares our innocence and erases the fact that Canada is not a peacemaker but a perpetrator of colonialism.(106)

Only once we dismantle our settled truths about ourselves and our relation to Indigenous peoples (which is always an ongoing process) can a true process of reconciliation begin. Regan shows that in the case of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program (ADRP) truth telling was *not* engaged in a meaningful way, and “rather than promoting healing and reconciliation, the ADRP actually replicated colonial power relations, in which the more powerful party ultimately controlled ... the claims settlement process.”(134) Instead, Regan points to “Indigenous diplomats,” “peace warriors,” and a long Indigenous history of peacemaking as offering insight into building a process of reconciliation built on decolonizing histories and authentic truth telling. In looking forward, she asks the reader not to dismiss the TRC out of hand, arguing that it holds the potential for a reconciliation process that does not revictimize IRS survivors or necessarily reaffirm the colonizer-colonized power relation. Instead, the TRC is argued to be a space where settlers and Indigenous peoples collectively engage in practices of truth telling, testimony, apology, and ethical listening. Such a process has the potential both ‘unsettle the settler within’ Canadians and “provide a critical pedagogical space wherein Indigenous peoples reclaim and revitalize the cultures, laws, and histories that colonizers attempted to destroy in residential schools.”(147)

Throughout the text Regan often argues the importance of “making space” for “decolonization” (6), “for Indigenous political philosophies and knowledge systems” (189), or for “shared horizons of cultural understanding” (188) to name a few examples. What immediately stands out is that throughout the text “making space” is almost purely a symbolic or discursive gesture. Now, strictly in the context of truth telling, reconciliation, and the Indian residential school system the focus is understandably on making pedagogical and ethical spaces for the exchange of testimony, apology, and truth. However, one wonders how useful this text can be in broader struggles for decolonization such as land

defense or land reclamation. In these contexts, “making space” takes on a whole new meaning. This is not to say that Regan’s powerful combination of critical pedagogy, reconciliation, and anti-colonial imperatives are not useful to land defenders from the Unist’o’en Camp to Kanohstaton. In fact, in her conclusion Regan points out that “the struggle to obtain reparations, restitution, and apology for residential school injustices is one component of a much wider political struggle for self-determination as fundamental for the human rights and dignity of Indigenous peoples.”(223) However, to only highlight the symbolic or discursive importance of “making decolonizing space for Indigenous history” (6) risks settling decolonization in pedagogy, speech, and thought – thus detaching decolonization from the land, something that Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang (2012) have since powerfully warned against.

Notwithstanding the small intervention above, *Unsettling the Settler Within* stands as an invaluable text for scholars and practitioners alike seeking a thorough and articulate diagnosis of “the settler problem” in Canada, a meaningful engagement with Indigenous knowledges and histories, and a framework for a decolonization based on truth telling, reconciliation, and critical hope. The optimistic tone of the book that remains to the very last page is refreshing and I believe it widens the accessibility of the text beyond professors and students of academia. Her critical, yet hopeful, vision for the TRC is captured in her question: “What if a settler came before the commission a colonizer and walked out an Indigenous ally?”(229) I would argue that this same hope for transformation exists in her writing this book: What if the reader opens this book a skeptic and closes it an optimist?

Regan’s parting words may give you a glimpse of this critical hope of hers, as she reminds us that “unsettling the settler within necessarily involves critical self-reflection and action in our lives” yet “at the same time, we must also work in respectful and humble partnership with Indigenous people to generate critical hope – a vision that is neither cynical nor utopian but rooted in truth as an ethical quality in the struggle for human dignity and freedom.”(237) Her call is modest, yet powerful: she asks that settler Canadians personally engage with the difficult realities of this country’s past and present and in doing so, “build a reconciliatory bridge” across the Indigenous-settler gap by (re)building trust and relationships founded upon respect, peace, and truth.(213) The burden of healing and reconciliation that must follow the tragic colonial history of the Indian residential schools is one that must not be carried solely by Indigenous survivors but, like settler colonialism itself, implicates us all and demands that we all work collectively toward a decolonizing future on Turtle Island.